RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Perceived Organizational Correlates of Work Commitment: An Exploratory Study Across Gender

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Submitted By:
Mandakini Rathore

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Under the supervision of:
Dr. Chandrani Sen
Head,
Department of Psychology
IIS University, Jaipur.

Department of Psychology
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INTRODUCTION

India is one of the largest sourcing destinations for the informational technology (IT) in the world. Around 10 million workforces are employed by the industry. The IT Industry has been experiencing a period of unparalleled change in the last few decades. Globalization has forced the companies towards restructuring in order to survive in the highly competitive world today. In order to be competitive, companies have realized the growing importance of offering high quality service and the need for highly skilled and motivated employees. Studies have shown that ethical work climate is positively associated with job motivation among employees (Joolae, Jalili, Hajibabaee, & Haghani, 2013). "Motivation and commitment are related yet distinguishable concepts, with commitment being one of the several energizing force that constitute motivation" (Meyer, 2004). Employees who perceive their work climate to be ethical are more satisfied and motivated towards their organization.

Ethical Climate

Ethics have been defined as "Frameworks for human conducts that relate to moral principles and attempt to distinguish right from wrong" (Miesing & Preble, 1985). For an organization to function effectively it is very important to have ethics and behaviour guidelines for all the employees.

Ethical climate of an organization as "The shared perception of what correct behaviour is, and how ethical situations should be handled in the organization" (Victor & Cullen, 1987). Ethical climate is a type of work climate that represents the shared perceptions of procedures, practises, policies of the organization. Different types of work climates have been identified by the researchers like innovation climate, creativity climate, warmth climate and support climate. The ethical climate of an organization tells you what represents right behaviour, and thus becomes a psychological mechanism which manages ethical issues. Ethical climate is a

part of organizational culture that represents how employees in an organization believe ethical decisions are made and how the ethical decisions should be made.

This concept helped in describing how organizational environment impacted unethical behaviour. Two approaches of assessing ethical climate are cognitive approach and shared-perception approach (Webber, 2007). The cognitive approach relates to the individual's perception of work environment whereas the shared perception approach relates to the unbiased data like organizational structure, employee code of conduct manuals and reward. Victor and Cullen (1988) introduced a measurement on ethical climate as their main purpose was to introduce a measurement based on the shared- perception approach. Organisational ethical climates and the manner in they are perceived by employee's play a very important role in shaping the way in which employees' behaviours towards their organisations occur and how these behaviours can affect outcomes of organisations (Elci & Alpkan, 2009).

The ethical climate scale is a two-dimensional matrix and it consists of both the ethical criteria and locus of analysis involved in decision making. It is derived from moral philosophy and psychological theories, and loci of analysis from sociological theories (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The ethical criteria include egoism, benevolence, and principle, while the locus of analysis includes the individual, local or cosmopolitan levels.

According to the ethical criteria there are three types of ethical climate (egoistic, benevolent and principled. These can occur at different levels within the same organization.

Egoistic – In an egoistic climate the employees perceive that ethical dilemmas are managed in a way that increases their self interests. Egoistic climates are related to behaviours of employees concerned with self interest and building their own behaviours (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Egoistic type of climate has a negative impact on employee commitment (Elci & Alpkan, 2009).

Benevolent- A benevolent type of climate is described by actions and decisions that create the best outcome for employee (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Benevolent climate is associated with caring and concern for other employees in the organization and is positively associated to commitment in employees (Elci & Alpkan, 2009).

Principled- This type of ethical climate exists when employees confirms to policies, rules and procedures of the organization in guiding their decisions. Moral development in the employee's results in progression from the concern for oneself to a concern for other employees and humanity and this finally results in an increase in ethical behaviours (Kohlberg, 1984).

The cross section of the two dimensions forms a 3 X 3 matrix consisting of nine types of ethical climates. The dimensions are explained in table 1.1:

Table 1.1: Types of Ethical Climates (Martin & Cullen, 2006)

Locus of analysis/Ethical Criterion	Individual	Local	Cosmopolitan
Egoism	Self- interest	Organizational Interest	Efficiency
Benevolence	Friendship	Team interest	Stakeholder Orientation
Principle	Personal Morality	Organizational Rules & Procedures	Laws & Codes

This matrix forms nine dimensions of ethical climate. The nine dimensions are-

1. Self- interest, 2. Company profit, 3. Efficiency, 4.Friendship, 5.Team interest, 6.Social responsibility, 7.Personal morality, 8.Company rules and procedure, and 9.Laws and professional codes. The five dimensions of ethical climate that have been examined most commonly instrumental, caring, personal morality, company rules and procedure, and laws and professional codes (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

The view of the dimensionality has varied across different research studies. Victor and Cullen (1988) developed a different typology of ethical climate. It consists of five dimensions i.e. caring, rules, law and code, independence, and instrumental. Caring climate is where the members of an organization have a concern for the well being of other members of the same organizations and this concern drives their behaviour and decisions. A caring climate is the most preferred type of ethical climate by the employees (Martin & Cullen, 2006). On the other hand a rules climate is a type of ethical climate where ethical decisions are perceived by the employees to be guided by a set of organizational rules or standards. The law and code type of ethical climate is identified by employee's perception about the organization that it supports ethical decision making based on external codes like law, The Bible or other professional codes. In an independence climate the employees perceive that the decisions and behaviours with ethical content are based on deeply held personal moral convictions, with minimal external influence driving ethical decisions. An instrumental climate exists when employees in an organization perceive that self interest (both individual and organizational) drives moral reasoning, even to the damage of others. It was found that instrumental climate is the least preferred type of ethical climate (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment has defined as "A motivational construct manifested in four cognition: meaning, self-determination, competence and impact" (Spreitzer, 1995). It is

related to an employee's current situation at work. Psychological empowerment is "A dynamic, motivational construct reflecting an individual's perceived self-efficacy, perceived level of autonomy and flexibility about performing the duties in an organization (Siegall & Gardner, 2000). Psychological empowerment has been categorized into four sub-types: 1. Meaning, 2. Self-determination, 3. Competence, and 4. Impact. Meaning is defined as "The value of a work goal or a purpose put in a relation to an individual's own ideals". If a task at work is meaningful it becomes easier for employees to concentrate on that task. On the contrary working on tasks that employees don't find meaningful can bring a sense of detachment and emptiness at work. Employees can build their own sense of meaningfulness by identifying what makes them feel passionate at work.

Competence is "An individual's confidence in his or her own ability to perform activities". Competence is similar to self efficacy. Competence brings a sense of mastery and pride in the employees in an organization. Managers should inculcate a sense of competence in the employees by providing opportunities for training and gaining knowledge, expressing positive feedback at work, and also by providing challenges that are matching employee's skill levels. By engaging in self-directed learning, taking initiatives in asking for feedbacks from supervisors, and managing extra workload, employees can build their own competence at work.

Self- determination is defined as "an individual's sense of having the opportunity to initiate and regulate actions". Employees who have high levels of self determination choose what tasks they have to work on, how to structure the tasks and how long to work on those tasks. A high level of self-determination leads to strong intrinsic motivation in the employees. It allows the employees to seek tasks that they find interesting and meaningful.

Impact has been defined as "the degree to which an individual can influence outcomes at work". A sense of impact can be explained through phrases like "being on track" and "getting

there". Managers can bring a sense of impact in their employees by celebrating milestones along the journey to the accomplishment of tasks.

Employees who are psychologically empowered believe that their work is meaningful, that they have chosen to go after that purpose in a way they believe is right, that they can be successful in accomplishment of that task.

Empowerment has been considered to be a management tool that can be used in every organization and across all the occupational sectors (Lashley, 1999).

Organizational Justice

Justice as a concept has been an area of interest among scholars for a very long time. Aristotle was the first to analyse what constitutes of fairness in the distribution of resources between individuals (Ross, 1925). It was before the second half of the twentieth century that the social psychological processes were applied to organizational settings, and insights into individual's perception of fairness in organizations achieved widespread attention.

Organizational justice as a term was first used by Greenberg (1987). Three sub dimensions of organizational justice are procedural, distributive and interactional (Greenberg, 1987). These dimensions are important for employees working in an organization for various reasons. Fair treatment acts as a support for the legitimacy of organizational authorities (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Faith and trust in authorities at workplace, reduced fear of exploitation are results of perceptions of fairness among employees. Need for control, esteem and belongingness are reinforced by fairness in the organization.

Procedural and distributive justices are the most studied justice types. Distributive justice refers to "the perceptions of fairness with regards to compensation, pay, promotions, job titles, and office assignments" (Karriker & Williams, 2009). Distributive justice is based on Adams and Deutsch's work. Employees who perceive them to be over rewarded or under

rewarded would be motivated to restore equity. Procedural justice is "The perceived fairness of the procedures used to determine the allocation of outcomes" (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Interactional justice has been defined as "Concerns about the fairness of interpersonal communication" (Bies & Moag, 1986). Interactional justice is not commonly used due to lack of construct clarity. Some researchers refer to interactional justice as a one-dimensional construct while others refer to it as having two dimensions: interpersonal and informational justice (Bies, 1986; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Interpersonal justice relates to the degree to which the employees are treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect by the other employees and supervisors in the organization.

It was reported by Karriker (2006) that procedural and informational justice are a unitary construct. Social scientists have recognized justice perceptions to be crucial for proper functioning of the organization and employee satisfaction with their job. Organizational injustice perceptions could lead to lower job satisfaction, low productivity, turnover, and lower level of commitment in the employees.

Organizational Commitment

Commitment has been one of the most commonly examined construct in the field of organizational behaviour. This is because commitment is relatively easy to assess and the impact of workplace commitment has shown to have individual level outcomes like absenteeism, motivation, performance and absenteeism. Commitment has been studied in the context of workplace literatures from the early 1960's. Commitment to the organization is different from commitment to the organization's values, goals and policies (Simon, Smithburg, & Thompson, 1950). "Commitment is an elastic term that can be used to describe both positive and negative emotions through the same underlying phenomenon" (Brickman, 1987). Commitment explains "consistent sequences of behaviour or courses of action"

(Hulin, 1991). Hulin (1991) explained commitment as an attitude which is directed towards an organization instead of specific roles at work. Organizational commitment is “The likelihood of an individual remaining with a job and feeling an attachment towards it, whether it is intrinsically satisfying or not” (Farell & Rusbult, 1981).

Several models of commitment have been proposed by researchers.

O’Reilly and Chatman’s Model (1986) - Commitment represents an attitude towards an organization, and attitudes develop through various mechanisms (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Commitment could be explained in three forms which are compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance exists when “attitudes, and corresponding behaviours, are adopted in order to gain specific rewards”. Identification occurs when “an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship”. Internalization occurs when “influence is accepted because the attitudes and behaviours one is being encouraged to adopt are congruent with existing values”. In more recent research by O’Reilly and his colleagues, identification and internalization were combined to form normative commitment. Compliance positively correlated with turnover.

Brickman’s 5 step model (1987) - A five step model was proposed by Brickman (1987). Brickman proposed that both negative and positive forces interact in order to form commitment and only through this reconciliation a true and deep commitment is formed. He believed that changes to this commitment formed by negative and positive forces would threaten and strengthen the commitment. The first stage is the pre-commitment stage. During this stage positive elements are explored by arousing positive emotional responses by the individuals. This stage is exploratory in nature. Individual determines whether the relationship with the employer should be developed or not. The second stage of commitment is also seen as being exploratory but it has a different focus. Negative elements start to

emerge during this stage and these become factors in the process of commitment. These negative elements emerge due to factors like family obligations and other job offers. Stage three is a passionate form of commitment and it focuses more on intrinsic positive elements. This stage overcomes the negative elements from the previous two stages. Stage four is related to the fading of the energy and passion from stage three. Employees may start to become bored to the object to which they are committed. The negative elements during this stage emerge not from external sources but from within the individual. The fifth stage involves a "bond of commitment". It refers to a deeper relationship. During this stage level of commitment of the individual continues to fluctuate as both negative and positive elements move in and out of the individual's consciousness.

Three component model by Meyer and Allen (1991) - Organizational commitment has three components (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The first is the continuation commitment which reflects the idea that "it is the continuation of the action of remaining with the organization". The second component of affective commitment is the most commonly studied form of commitment. Affective commitment is based on an emotional attachment to the organization due to identification with the organization" (Kanter, 1968). Employees want to stay with the organization as a result of the connection they feel with the organization's goals and values. The normative type of commitment exists when "an individual feels an obligation to remain within the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1990). The employee feels that he or she should continue with the organization as he or she feels that it would be morally right to do so (Marsh & Manmari, 1977; Wiener, 1982).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The proposed study will be examining the perceived organizational correlates on work commitment. The study will be conducted on employees from the IT sector in India.

Ethical Climate

Ethical climate has been studied in relation to factors like commitment, job satisfaction, personal and organizational values, justice perceptions, leadership styles and work engagement. In a study by Porter (2010) a relationship between ethical climate and moral distress was studies on a Nurse Managers' in a hospital. It was revealed in the study that issues within the ethical climate of the hospital led to the development of moral distress in the employees.

Cullen et al. (2003) in his further research on ethical climate found that benevolent and principled ethical climates are positively related to organizational commitment in professional workers whereas egoistic climate is negatively related to organizational commitment. It is evident in the available researches on the relationship between perceived ethical climate and organizational commitment that there is a positive relationship between the two factors. In a study on relationships between Ethical climates, ethical ideology and organizational commitment (Putranta, 2008) on staff members from Catholic Higher education institutions in Indonesia, staff members showed higher levels of affective and normative commitment. Employees who believed that the ethical climate at their organization was supporting their personal values showed affective commitment toward their organization. Affective commitment relates to positive feelings which result in desire to work and continue in the same organization. In this study relationship between different types of ethical climate and three types of commitment were examined for the first time.

In an attempt to understand the relationship of perceived ethical climate on organizational commitment, it was found that there is a significant difference between organizational commitment and different types of perceived ethical climate (Moore, 2012). Faculty members of educational institution reported lower level of commitment when they perceived their organization to have an egoistic ethical climate. Higher level of commitment was reported by employees who perceived their organizational climate to be benevolent or principled. Female employees showed higher levels of organizational commitment than the male employees. However additional research on detailed analysis of affective, normative and continuance commitment and their individual relationship with perceived ethical climate and other work related factors in different occupational settings would provide a better understanding of the relationship.

Perception of Positive ethical climate was positively associated with affective and continuance types of commitment in a study to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and ethical climate in employees working in a firm in Istanbul (Unal, 2012). A mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship was also studied. Ethical climate had a significant impact on affective and continuance commitment.

In all the reviewed researches the effect of gender and other individual characteristics was missing.

Psychological empowerment

Employee empowerment has been associated with organizational outcomes such as innovation, greater effectiveness, and better performance. Researchers have proven that there is a positive relation between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment .Employee commitment increases with an increase in empowerment in the workplace (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006). It is very important for the managers and leadership to provide an

environment at workplace where the employees feel that they have the power in decision making and have a sense of purpose at workplace. This would further lead to higher commitment levels in the employees.

In an empirical study on the effect of psychological empowerment on employee commitment, psychological empowerment was significantly associated with all 3 types of commitment i.e. affective, normative and continuance (Rawat, 2011). Psychological empowerment has significant effects on procedural and distributive commitment but not on normative commitment.

The relationship between psychological empowerment in commitment of employee towards their organizations has been significant in the past researches. In an attempt to elaborate the role of psychological empowerment in committing employees with organization in the banking sector, significant effect of all dimensions of psychological empowerment i.e. meaning, competence, self determination and impact was shown on organizational commitment. (Hashmi, 2012). In the available literature on psychological empowerment and organizational commitment, empowerment has been positively correlated with affective, normative and continuance types of commitment.

In a research by Dude (2012) impact of Psychological empowerment, job autonomy and distributive justice were found to be significantly associated with organizational commitment in principals from public, private/parochial schools, and charter schools. In the study higher levels of psychological empowerment were associated with higher levels of organizational commitment. Gender played a significant role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment. Women with low empowerment were less committed to the organization. Similarly low level of job autonomy in women led to low commitment in the organization. It was suggested to explore organizational commitment with other variables like procedural justice, trust and resistance to change.

Organizational Justice

Past Researches on Organizational justice have suggested that organizations that treat their employees fairly, in return get higher productivity and commitment from their employees. Research shows that perceptions of procedural and distributive justice can lead to higher OCB, commitment, job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and task performance among organizational members (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).Organizational justice has been researched widely with relation to variables like performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, quality of work life, personality traits and job satisfaction. In a study to examine the relationship between justice perceptions and organizational commitment on employees in the hospitality industry (Lee, 2000), Procedural justice was negatively related to organizational commitment. However procedural justice had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. It was suggested by the researcher for the managers to be more encouraging and fair towards the employees in order to achieve higher levels of commitment. It was suggested that future researches should be conducted in different occupational sectors so that varied results could be achieved.

A significant relationship was revealed between procedural justice and distributive justice and organizational commitment among the employee's working for small and middle size companies in Malaysia (Fatt & Heng 2010). Employees who viewed their organizations to be fair and understanding had higher level of commitment toward their organization.

Srivastava (2015) explored the relationship between different types of organizational justice and organizational commitment among healthcare professionals in India. Informational justice was the only type of justice that showed positive relationship with organizational commitment. Procedural, distributive and interpersonal justice perceptions showed a negative relationship with commitment. It was suggested that managers should keep their employees well informed about the organization and its activities in order to achieve feelings of loyalty

and trust from their employees. One of the limitations in the study was the sample. The sample was collected from just one occupation i.e. the health care professionals. Future research should have sample from other private and public service sectors in India.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been studied by researchers with variables like personality correlates, occupational ranks, leadership styles, job satisfaction, employee engagement, ethical climate, empowerment and organizational justice. In a study on personality correlates of organizational commitment on secondary school teachers in India, it was revealed that female teachers are more emotionally unstable, sociable, assertive and talkative compared to men (Pruthi & Sharma (2014). Female teachers were found to be more committed to their work compared to male counterparts. Schools teachers who are sociable, optimistic, imaginative show high level of affective and normative commitment.

In a study on transformational leadership and organizational commitment on employees from large multi-national corporations in the United States (Dunn, Dastoor, & Sims, 2012), positive relationship between transformational leadership practises and affective and normative commitment was shown. Transformational leadership behaviour was negatively related to continuance commitment. It was also indicated that nation of the employment had no impact on the relationship between leadership behaviour and employee work commitment.

In a study by Mahanta (2012) to assess the employee commitment level in industries in India, results showed that most of the employees had a moderate level of work commitment. The employees from the service sector showed higher levels of commitment compared to the employees in the manufacturing sector. Gender and marital status had no significant relationship with the organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment was significantly and positively correlated with psychological contract in a study by Agarwal (2011). Every employee wants to be a part of the organization and feels proud to be associated with the organization. Females in the study scored less on commitment and psychological contract.

METHODOLOGY

Rationale of the study:

The present study is focused on examining perceived organizational correlates (Perceived ethical climate, psychological empowerment & organizational justice) on work commitment in the IT sector. Also a moderating effect across gender will be analysed. As the IT sector is growing in India, there is a need to focus on factors affecting employee productivity and commitment towards work. Lack of commitment is associated with employee absenteeism, poor performance, and low productivity and majorly turnover. Organizational commitment has been a topic of extensive research throughout the world and has been studied widely with factors like job satisfaction, leadership and job characteristics.

Ethical climate is one of the newest streams in the field of organizational behaviour. In order to achieve higher commitment levels and satisfaction in the employees, it is important to have an understanding of ethics and build an ethical climate in the organization. Researches on other climate types such as Service climate (Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000), safety climate (Zohar, 1980, 2000), and justice climate (Nanmann & Bennett, 2000) are commonly found but work on ethical climate has been limited. Studies related to ethical climate have examined demographic variables like age and gender, personality characteristics and organizational outcomes (Job satisfaction, work commitment) but there has been a dearth of research work relating it to other factors like leadership, justice. Ethical climate has been researched in countries like US, Australia and Turkey in various sectors like insurance, educational and hospitality sector but has not been studied on a wider level in India. Ethical climate and organizational justice can help in decreasing the work related stress of employees on organizations (Sert, Elci & Sener, 2014). Organizational Justice "is an important construct of work behaviour and attitudes" (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rup, 2000). It has been

revealed through previous researches that justice perceptions are positively related to higher commitment levels in organizations. Researches on justice perceptions and organizational commitment are commonly found in other countries, but researches relating justice perceptions and organizational commitment in India are very few. This study will focus on studying this relationship in the growing IT sector which would add to the previous researches across different occupational sectors like banking, hospitality and educational institutes. Psychological empowerment has been studied with factors like burnout, wellness of employees, leadership, commitment and job performance. However studies relating psychological empowerment and ethical climate were not found. Ethical climate and psychological empowerment are both important factors for an organization to work effectively. Feeling of self efficacy, mastery and power in a moral atmosphere of work environment could lead to work outcomes like job satisfaction and commitment. Employees Psychological empowerment, perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment have been researched across various educational institutions, hospitality industry, Airline staff and the banking sector. A study on the relationship between these factors will provide a better understanding of the different aspects of empowerment-meaning, competence, impact and self determination , dimensions of justice and their relationship with affective, normative and continuance commitment among the employees in the IT sector.

Moderating effect of Gender on commitment has been significant in previous available researches. In this study this moderating effect will be studied with relation to other psychological variables like Ethical climate, empowerment and organizational justice which would add to the previous studies. The present study will give an understanding of employees' perception of ethical climate, empowerment and perceived justice in the organization and will help the supervisors/managers and leadership achieve higher levels of

commitment in the employees. This study will focus on studying the 3 dimensions of commitment i.e. distributive, procedural and interactional, by examining the perceived ethical climate, perceived organizational justice and employee empowerment in the organization.

Aims and Objectives:

1. To study the relationship between perceived ethical climate and organizational commitment.
2. To examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment.
3. To investigate the relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment.
4. To explore the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between perceived ethical climate and organisational commitment, psychological empowerment and organizational commitment and perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be no significant positive relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment.
2. There will be no significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment.
3. There will be no significant positive relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment.
4. The relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment will not be influenced by gender.

5. The relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment will not be influenced by gender.
6. The relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment will not be influenced by gender.

Sample of the study:

The study will be conducted on 200 IT professionals from the IT companies. The participants will include both male and female employees in an equal ratio in the IT sector.

Inclusion criteria-

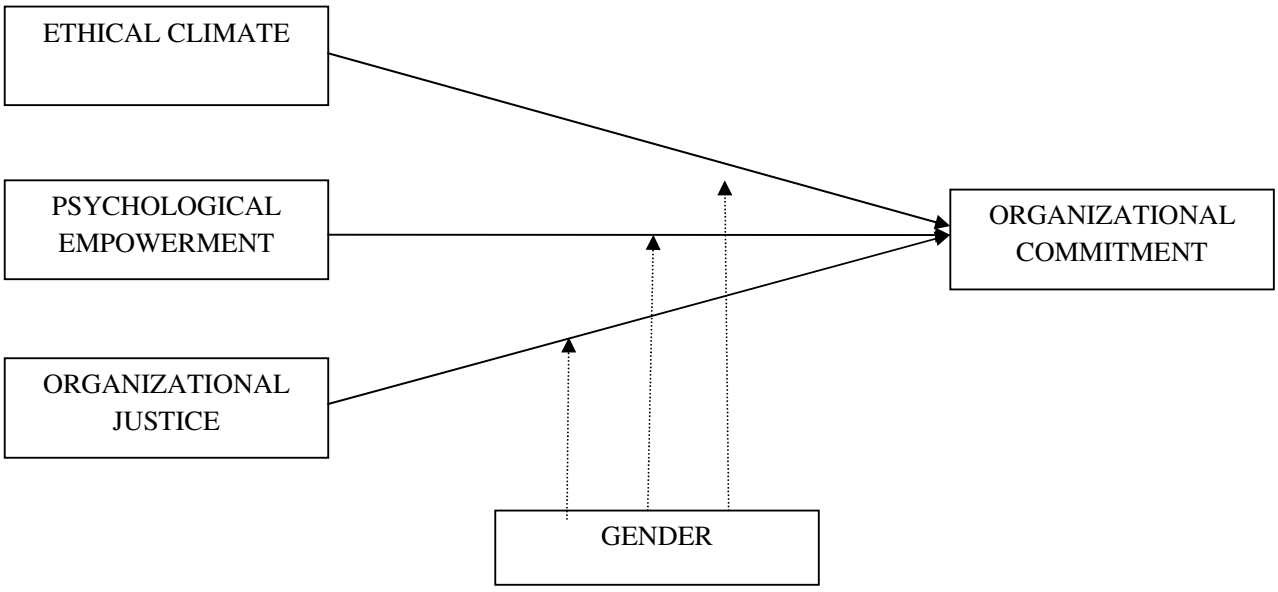
1. Employees working at mid levels in the companies.
2. Full time employees
3. Employees with an experience of minimum 2 years in the IT sector.
4. Employees with a minimum educational qualification of B-Tech.

Exclusion criteria-

1. Part-time employees.
2. Employees with an experience of less than 2 years in the IT sector.

Research Design:

A Correlational Study



Proposed measurement tools to be used:

1. Ethical Climate- Ethical climate Questionnaire (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988)

2. Psychological Empowerment- Psychological empowerment scale (Spreitzer, 1995)

3. Organizational Justice - Organizational justice perception scale (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993).

4. Organizational Commitment - Organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen 1997)

Statistical Analysis:

Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation and Moderation analysis.

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